



David J. Della
Seattle City Councilmember

SEATTLE PERSPECTIVE

Getting Things Done & Getting Seattle Working Again

Newsletter from Seattle City Councilmember David J. Della

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GREETINGS

I am in the middle of my first term and am continually amazed how residents care deeply about our city. Collectively, we desire to make Seattle the best place to live, work, and play. On your behalf, I continue to tackle and resolve important city issues. We have accomplished a lot during these past two years. I face these issues head on by listening to you, rolling up my sleeves and carefully studying the details and making hard decisions.

In this edition of *Seattle Perspective*, I'll explain why we have to break the gridlock and get moving to rebuild the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Seattle Center is at an important crossroads and I want to know your ideas and thoughts about one of our most treasured city assets. In this edition of *Seattle Perspective*, you'll find a brief survey on Seattle Center that I hope you'll take a few moments to fill out and return.

You'll also find brief updates on other issues including: efforts to support comprehensive immigration reform that is fair and just; my initiative to review, evaluate, and make improvements to the Parks Department's current public process practices; work to implement the development of a Skateboard Parks Plan; and the first ever State of the Neighborhoods Summit where community members and elected officials were able to share ideas about making our city work better.

You'll also read about how I pushed for clean waters by prohibiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers along streams and how I made a difference in crafting a Downtown zoning code that supports living wage jobs and affordable housing for all.

Please continue to contact me to share your thoughts on neighborhood and city issues. I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you to get things done and get Seattle working again.

Sincerely,

Councilmember David J. Della

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VIADUCT UPDATE

Another Big Dig?

City Council will play a key role in determining the fate of the deteriorating Alaskan Way Viaduct. The state legislature, in approving a regional transportation package this year, required that the City Council hold a series of public hearings and then by ordinance make a decision on whether or not to rebuild the Viaduct or replace this critical piece of SR-99 with a tunnel. As an alternative, the legislature also provided that the Council could put this important question before voters in the fall.

Last December, I took a stand and announced my support for rebuilding the Viaduct for two basic reasons. First, public safety is a key consideration. It has been more than five years since the Nisqually earthquake rocked our city. As a public safety issue, I cannot emphasize enough the urgency of addressing and deciding on the replacement of the Viaduct. Every day that we wait without a decision, we're gambling with people's safety and lives.

Second, we must also be realistic and fiscally responsible in weighing the options for this vital transportation corridor. The federal government has already agreed to contribute approximately \$231 million for this project. I have discussed this issue with Senator Patty Murray's office, and in all likelihood, we shouldn't expect a whole lot more partly because the federal government is funneling more money to rebuild the southeast part of the country as a result of the Katrina devastation. The state legislature allocated roughly \$2.2 billion. Estimates of rebuilding the Viaduct will cost \$2.5-2.9 billion. We have the money in hand now to proceed with this option.

Right now, the estimates of the tunnel proposal cost \$3.7-4.5 billion. However, there seems to be a flurry of numbers floating around to make the costs of the tunnel more palatable to the public. The latest proposal has even been scaled down to a 'core' option in an attempt to reel in the

costs and also **includes increasing utility costs to cover the funding gap!**

The Seattle version of a "Big Dig" is not acceptable. I understand that the tunnel will indeed be a prettier option and will increase the land values in our waterfront. But as we saw in Boston, predicting the actual costs of a "big dig" may be elusive and most likely will spiral upward costing the taxpayers a lot more than originally anticipated.

It's time to bring fiscal sanity to transportation solutions. It's time to put public safety at the forefront of this debate. Every day that we hold out false hope that funding for a tunnel will be found, we gamble with people's safety and lives. And certainly, every day that we delay replacing the Viaduct, we increase the chances of our region's traffic coming to a grinding halt when we least expect it.

I believe that we need to support the responsible option of replacing the Viaduct with a similar structure. But I also believe that this decision belongs to the people. Its time to break the gridlock and get to work. A public vote will allow us to do so.



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Be Fair and Just

In March, the City Council weighed in on federal immigration reform legislation that could have sweeping impacts on thousands of Seattle residents. Councilmember Tom Rasmussen and I put forward a resolution urging Washington's congressional delegation to support bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation, as proposed by Senators McCain and Kennedy.

Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced legislation that would (among other provisions) create a path for undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship, enable employers to legally hire needed immigrant workers and launch a foundation for charitable contributions to support English language instruction for immigrants.

Significant local concerns have been raised about a competing immigration reform bill introduced (and adopted by the House of Representatives) by Wisconsin Congressman James Sensenbrenner (R). His bill would criminalize violations of federal immigration law and instantly make a felon out of every undocumented immigrant. It would require Seattle police officers to enforce immigration laws and jeopardize millions of federal grant dollars to help refugee and immigrant communities.

Our city has a longstanding policy of supporting social service networks that assist refugee and immigrant communities regardless of legal status, and providing equal services to all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or immigration status. City law also prohibits Seattle Police from requesting specific documents for the sole purpose of determining a person's immigration status, and that officers may not initiate police action based solely on this information. The Sensenbrenner bill would force the City to reverse its policies or place millions in federal funding in jeopardy.

We can't turn our backs on thousands of Seattleites just because of where they were born. Our city is world-class because of contributions from many people from all over. When we talk about comprehensive immigration reform, Seattle has a real stake in ensuring that it is fair and just.



Councilmember Della in front of a mural he helped paint at the UW Ethnic Cultural Center.



Councilmember Della presented a proclamation to the SANDIWA Conference leadership and participants.

KEEPING PARKS GREEN, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE AND VIBRANT

Seattle Center Executive Director Departs After Eighteen Years of Service

Virginia Anderson announced that she would be stepping down as executive director of Seattle Center after 18 years of service to the City and the public. No doubt, she leaves some big shoes to fill. I wish to personally thank her for all of her years of service to the public. Her shared vision of establishing Seattle Center as the “Nation’s Best Gathering Place” has helped guide Seattle Center through many stages and transitions. Also under her leadership, she connected and welcomed many new groups, constituencies and users to the Seattle Center campus. This devotion to inclusion has set the bar for executive directors to follow. Virginia will be missed and I wish her the best in her future endeavors.



Developing a New Vision for the Seattle Center

Seattle Center is at an important crossroads. It’s time that we have a public conversation to determine the future of our city’s “best gathering place.” It’s your Seattle Center and I want to hear from you. This edition of *Seattle Perspective* contains a brief survey on your thoughts on Seattle Center and its future. Please take a few moments to fill it out.

Parks Department’s Community Processes

Our city is growing rapidly, and our parks and open spaces face challenges to accommodate an ever increasing number of people and uses. We all want parks and open spaces. We also want facilities that help meet our recreational needs. To help meet these goals, we’ve been blessed with resources such as the Pro Parks Levy – approved and paid for by the people of this city. Our parks belong to the people. The public needs to be fully engaged in the planning for the development and maintenance of our parks.

Recently, I’ve asked the City Auditor’s Office to review and evaluate the Parks Department’s current public process practices. The audit should include a review of best practices – both within the city and in other municipalities – and recommended changes. The review would commence in June with an end report anticipated for December of this year.

Opinions, visions and feelings for parks vary greatly and decisions about their future are not always easy. Even at the end of extensive public processes not everyone will agree. There will be instances where we may not reach consensus. However, we must ensure that the public has an authentic opportunity to participate, discuss, debate and inform the City’s decisions. It will be good to take a fresh look at our planning processes from an outside perspective.

“We must ensure that the public has an authentic opportunity to participate in, discuss, debate and inform the City’s decisions.”

KEEPING PARKS GREEN, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE AND VIBRANT

Skate Park Advisory Task Force Selected, Path for Planning Mapped Out

Under legislation that I developed and the City Council unanimously approved, the Parks Department will be working in partnership with a newly formed Skate Park Advisory Task Force to develop a citywide comprehensive plan for skateboard parks. This effort was modeled after a similar planning process undertaken in Portland, Oregon. We've outlawed skateboarding in certain parts of the city; however, there are thousands of people of a variety of backgrounds and ages who enjoy skateboarding for sport and leisure. In the past, siting of skateboard parks has proven to be tricky. Skateboarders have found that they've been sent to the most isolated areas of the city to enjoy this sport. At the same time, some neighbors of parks have expressed concerns that a skateboard park might be located too close to their home.

By taking a step back, and looking at this issue more comprehensively, this legislation will go a long way to meet the needs of the growing skateboarding community and to facilitate a dialogue among various stakeholders and neighborhoods about the siting of skateboard parks in our city.

Our City's boards, commissions and task forces are comprised of volunteers who give generously of their time. I wish to extend my gratitude to: George Blomberg, Joe Bell, John Carr, Susanne Friedman, Jelani Jackson, Matt Johnston, Jeanne Krikawa, Christine Larsen, Joyce Moty, Scott Shinn and Nin Truong for agreeing to serve as members of the newly formed Skate Park Advisory Task Force. This is a dynamic group who collectively represent different viewpoints. Their work will be invaluable in the months to come. To get the specifics on the Skate Park Advisory Task Force, and to learn more about the processes they will undertake in the coming months, you can visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm#meetings>.

Downtown Parks Plan

Last year, the Mayor convened a task force to look at our downtown parks and make recommendations for possible improvements. The task force has concluded their work and I anticipate that in the coming weeks they will be transmitting their findings to the City Council for our review and your feedback. You can find out more about the task force and their proposed recommendations by visiting: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/projects/downtown.asp> Our downtown parks are unique and each one plays an important role in serving the needs of our thousands of downtown workers, visitors and residents. I plan to review the recommendations keeping in mind that our parks must remain accessible to everyone.



BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

State of the Neighborhoods Summit

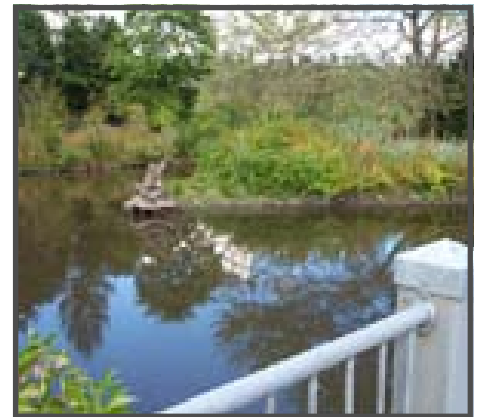
Our city shines partly because of our vibrant neighborhoods. In January, the City Neighborhood Council and the City convened a Neighborhoods Summit. This gathering served as an opportunity for District Council members and others to share what's working and not working in their neighborhoods, develop ways to address issues, and to meet city staff who can help. The work that our city's neighborhood activists spearhead is tremendous. The summit was a good way for folks to come together to share valuable information and experiences.



Councilmember Della with City Neighborhood Council leaders at the Neighborhood Summit.

Pushing for Clean Waters for All — Critical Areas Ordinance

I care deeply about the environment. Balancing what we allow to be built in our urban city, while protecting the environment is paramount. With this goal in mind, I introduced legislation to prohibit the use of pesticides and fertilizers within 50 feet along streams and shorelines. Protecting our waters from toxic chemicals will help to ensure the health of fish and wildlife. We need to leave a legacy to future generations by enacting measures that protect our City from toxics that harm the environment and people.



One of the many streams in Seattle.

Fostering Economic Growth, Living Wage Jobs, and Workforce Housing — Downtown Zoning

Over half a million people choose to be a part of our community because they enjoy living in a vibrant, diverse and active City with options for activities and amenities. As a lifelong resident, I love living here also in part because we can enjoy many of the amenities that the great, clean, natural outdoors have to offer.

As Council considered changes proposed to nearly double the square footage available for downtown commercial and residential development, I drafted amendments to foster policies to create more living wage jobs, open space, and help move people and goods through and around our downtown community. The Urban Development and Planning Committee unanimously approved these changes. I voted to increase charges to developers for building above certain heights. Proceeds from these charges will increase available funds for affordable housing. I also voted for other design measures that will enhance the experience of living and working in the Center City.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee Klatch



Come join me for coffee!

Starting this spring, I'll be holding *Coffee Klatches* at various coffee shops throughout our City once a month. This will be an opportunity for you to come and share your thoughts with me on all of the latest city issues.

The first Coffee Klatch will be on **Saturday, April 29th, from 8:00 -10:00 AM at *Revolutions* in Greenlake (7012 Woodlawn Ave. NE).**

You can visit my website or contact Lilah Gael (206-684-8806) in my office to find out all of the details for other upcoming Coffee Klatches.



Groundbreaking at the Montlake Community Center.



Reading for Preschool Children at the Yesler Terrace Headstart Program.

Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor Committee Meeting

April 5th, April 26th, May 3rd, May 17th, June 7th, and June 21st
2:00 – 4:00 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall

Nihonmachi Terrace Grand opening

April 6th, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Nihonmachi Terrace, 651 S. Main

Families and Education Levy Oversight Committee

April 18th
4:00 – 5:00 PM, City Hall, Room #370

Washington State Students of Color Conference

April 22nd 11:15-11:45 AM
SeaTac Doubletree Hotel

Joint meeting of Seattle City Council and Seattle School Board

April 28th, 9:30-11:30 AM
Council Chambers, City Hall

Rainier Beach High School Foundation Multi-Cultural Dinner and Student Performance

May 18th, 5:30-7:30 PM, Rainier Beach High School

Walk for Rice

June 3rd 8:00am-12:30pm, Seward Park